



Tab F, No. 6

June Council Meeting

# Modification of For-Hire Vessel Trip Declaration Requirements



# Background

## **May 2017:** Finalized Generic Amendment: Modifications to Charter Vessel and Headboat Reporting Requirements

- Included trip declaration (hail-out) requirement
- Trip declarations are required each time a Gulf permitted federal for-hire vessel moves on the water (i.e., bait/ice trips, transportation to/from private residences, sunset cruises).
- For fishing trips, NOAA Fisheries staff matches trip declarations with the logbook from that trip.



# Background

AP Members and the public expressed concern over having to submit multiple trip declarations.

- Burdensome to declare each time boat moves on the water – declaring non-fishing trip for vessel to get ice, bait, pick up clients then declaring again to embark on fishing trip
- Increased burden for dual-permitted vessels who have to submit using multiple applications
- **Council Motion (April 2022):**  
To direct staff to develop an abbreviated framework document addressing the trip declaration requirements.



# Draft Purpose and Need

- The **purpose** is to reduce the number of declarations and burden on permitted for-hire vessels participating in the Gulf reef fish and CMP fisheries making multiple non-fishing trip declarations while conducting on-the-water activities, outside of fishing trips.
- The **need** for this action is to reduce the amount of non-fishing trip declarations while maintaining data integrity of the program.



# Discussion:

- Limit to 60-minute window of non-fishing activity
  - Recommended by NMFS and OLE, presented at last Council meeting
  - Timeframes above one hour may result in VMS pings without defined activity from declaration
  - May be more difficult to ensure compliance and verify vessel activity
  - May result in vessel operator forgetting to make trip declaration
  - Increased administrative burden on OLE and SEFHIER to analyze data for compliance and accuracy



# Discussion:

- Industry indicated 60-minute window may not be enough time
  - Some vessels have longer distance for fuel, bait, passenger pick-up
  - Unlikely any fishing trips would be less than three or four hours



# Feedback:

## Abbreviated Framework

- Council would need to decide at this meeting on a single time
  - Similar to recent Historical Captain Permits Conversion document
- Administrative Document – with no anticipated biological impacts

## Framework Action

Would require range of alternatives

- Anticipate 3 Alternatives: 60, 90 or 120 minutes
- Based on ping rates or feasible option where OLE can still validate trips
- Longer process 1-3 Council meetings, approximately 9 months to 1-year to develop and implement



# Other Considerations

## Dual-permitted vessels:

- For vessels with Gulf for-hire and Gulf commercial reef fish federally permitted vessels, operator must submit under each permit's approved form.
- Possibility to streamline this reporting process with regulatory change
- One declaration to meet the SEFHIER and commercial requirement for the for-hire declaration

